



## **The Urgency of a Two-State Solution (and Permanent Borders)**

The outlines of an agreement are by now well-known and widely accepted: Borders based on the 1967 lines with agreed reciprocal land swaps allowing Israeli incorporation of a majority of settlers, as well as Palestinian viability and contiguity; a sharing of Jerusalem that is based on demographic realities establishing the capitals of the two states and allowing freedom of access and respect for all holy sites; robust security arrangements; and an agreed upon resolution of the refugee issue that resettles refugees outside of Israel.

Unfortunately, time and political-will in the region are in short supply and it appears to many observers that the window of opportunity for achieving a two-state solution is rapidly closing. While majorities of both the Israeli and Palestinian populations continue to support a two-state solution, ongoing developments, entrenched and expanding settlements, and a growing movement in some Palestinian and international circles for a one-state outcome suggest that the trajectory is trending against the two-state option, thereby threatening Israel's future. Lastly, growing radicalization in the region makes achieving a two-state solution evermore challenging. We no longer have the luxury of waiting for a riper time to pursue peace; now is that time.

J Street believes that urgently reaching a sustainable two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is both a fundamental American interest and essential to the survival and security of Israel. In the seventh decade following its establishment, Israel and most of her neighbors have yet to secure internationally recognized borders or to make peace.

With the Jewish and Arab populations between the Jordan River and Mediterranean Sea at near-parity, demographic trends preclude Israel from maintaining control over all of Greater Israel while remaining a democratic state and a homeland for the Jewish people. As former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said in November 2007, "If the day comes when the two-state solution collapses, and we face a South African-style struggle for equal voting rights, then, as soon as that happens, the State of Israel is finished."

The two-state solution represents the best way to ensure that Israel remains a democracy and a national home for the Jewish people. The two-state solution has been American policy across four administrations and has been endorsed by each of the most recent Israeli and Palestinian leaders. Israeli Defense Minister (and former Prime Minister) Ehud Barak recently said, "The lack of a solution to the problem of border demarcation within the historic Land of Israel -- and not an Iranian bomb -- is the most serious threat to Israel's future." The contours of a two-state solution are well known. President Clinton outlined the parameters in 2000, and progress on this basis was made in Taba in 2001 and under Israeli Prime Minister Olmert in 2008. Various initiatives have spelled out the principles and even the details.

J Street is the political home for pro-Israel, pro-peace Americans.

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(202) 596-5207